

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. This is a serious amendment, as Senator Chambers indicated, this is a small portion of my 1994 personal priority bill, which is...was advanced from the General Affairs Committee and has been held on General File. I would ask for its adoption tonight to this measure. What this is a bill...what this amendment would do is deal with the bingo tax. We currently have statewide bingo tax of 6 percent of the gross on every bingo game in the state, and an additional 2 percent local bingo tax. The background on this measure is that over, not this past interim, but the interim before there was a committee that met regarding charitable gaming in the State of Nebraska, had a number of meetings, came up with a number of recommendations, all of which are contained in what is currently LB 694, on Final Reading, except for the tax provisions, which were included in a separate bill, LB 489, introduced last session. What LB 489 would have done is adjust the taxes for charitable gaming across the board. It would have increased the pickle tax, it would have increased the keno tax, it would decrease the bingo tax, so they were all at 3 percent of gross. Currently the pickle tax is a little less than that, the keno tax is at 2 percent, and the bingo tax, statewide, combined local and state, is at 8 percent. What this amendment would do is simply take the single recommendation contained in LB 489, which is the elimination of the local tax on bingo, and incorporate that into LB 961. Now I'm having a...obviously you can tell simply from the rates in and of themselves, the 8 percent bingo as opposed to the much lower rates for keno and pickle cards, that bingo has not been treated very well statewide, as far as tax policy goes. There are a couple different reasons for that. Number one, is that the genesis of the keno tax in the State of Nebraska was a period about 15 years ago when bingo was the only game in town, when it was able to thrive because of that, and raised a great deal of revenue for the charities that are allowed to conduct it, and in fact had some entrepreneurs that were running keno games...or bingo games that were...the state was wanting to discourage. So at that time a very high tax rate was put in, including 4 percent that was devoted to local subdivisions, because at that time local subdivision of government were the sole regulating entity for bingo. There was no state control. Literally there was a state licensing system that consisted of a drawer in the State Treasurer's Office where the licenses were filed never to see the light of the day again. Since then there have been a number of evolutions in the gaming area including the advent of keno, the escalation of the use of